

June 16, 1959

Dr. Richard Davies
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Dear Dick:

I've just gotten back from my European trip and among the things I was delighted to find was the report Number 30-1 from the JPL. I've just had an opportunity to glance through it and my immediate reaction is that this is a splendid job and that the report should have as wide a distribution as possible. I think some way should be found to make it readily available to every scientist in the country who might have, or might be provoked to have, an interest in space research. For anyone with any technical background it is a far more useful summary than, for example, the Rand report which was issued as Congressional Document.

I am sure you would have taken the initiative yourself to distribute copies to the other members of Westex if this is feasible. Also, I wonder if you could send a copy to Dr. H. B. Steinbach, of the University of Chicago, Department of Zoology. Dr. Steinbach has been asked to organize still another committee of the National Academy of Sciences dealing with the general problems of extra-terrestrial life. Whether he will go ahead with this and what its relationships to the Space Science Board would be, I do not know but I am sure he would be deeply interested.

I have to give some thought during the next few weeks on what to do next, at least for my own part, in this business. I think the primary objective, of stirring up some intelligent interest in planetary biology, has been pretty well achieved. Mel Calvin, as you know, is especially excited and will be doing a lot of tangible and useful work. The Space Science Board has decided to incorporate planetary biology as the major, rather than the secondary, interest of its biosciences subcommittee and Hartline wrote a very gratifying letter outlining the Academy's present position. The Board has also given assurances of continued support for our Westex meetings to whatever degree we may feel is appropriate. I have also been asked to join the Board's subcommittee for formal liaison but this does not alter very much. As you may know, in perhaps more detail than I do, Calvin has also organized another advisory group in connection with the Bio-Astronautics Program. I am not too keen on any implied association with the Man in Space Program but in any case, he should get the best help available for his work in that direction. The Academy does want a draft "position paper" for a statement on general policy on biological exploration, in somewhat more detail and more critical than the Cetex Report

and the immediate task may well be to prepare such a paper for review by Westex at the end of the summer. I think that pages 59 through 86 of the JPL report go a long way towards the kind of summary "handbook" that I had felt should be promulgated as a preface to the position paper. Can you see any substantial material that could be included in a more expansive version? In fact, would JPL have any objection to the direct or paraphrased use of this chapter in a presentation to the Academy?

If there is any chance of your finding yourself around San Francisco during the summer, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss these matters with you again.

Thanks very much for the report and, as ever,

Joshua Lederberg